Working Party on Consumer Product Safety

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS ON RISK ASSESSMENT WORK

22-23 October 2012

Attached are proposed steps to follow up on the OECD Workshop on product risk assessment, held on 20 April 2012, in Tel-Aviv, Israel, a summary of which is available in document DSTI/CP/CPS(2012)16.

The document will be discussed under item 8 of the draft agenda for the 5th working party session, to be held on 22-23 October, in Paris. Written comments can also be provided in advance of the meeting to the secretariat (Ewelina.Marek@oecd.org).

Please note that an informal meeting to prepare the discussion of item 8 will be held on 19 October, at 8h30, in Brussels.

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SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS

Background

1. The Working Party on Consumer Product Safety held a workshop on product risk assessment on 20 April in Tel-Aviv, Israel; a summary is available in document DSTI/CP/CPS(2012)16. The workshop aimed to:
   - Explore the context and vision of effective consumer product safety risk assessment;
   - Identify the key attributes of risk assessment; and
   - Gather views from stakeholders from government, business, consumer organisations and academia.

2. Workshop participants not only enhanced their understanding of risk assessment but also identified future actions that might be taken to further develop risk assessment thinking and practices. This document sets out some possible steps the working party may like to take if it chooses to progress further with its work on risk assessment. It was prepared principally by the Chair of the working party.

Action points

3. At its 5th session, the working party will be invited to discuss and agree on next steps it may want to take as follow-up to the workshop.

4. Prior to that, an informal meeting on this topic will be held on 19 October, in Brussels, in advance of the official launch of the OECD global portal on product recalls [DSTI/CP/CPS(2012)12]. The informal meeting will start at 8h30 till 9h45 at Rue Breydel 4, entry B232, in room 2/17 A (a map is available in Annex I). Please note that participants have to register with their identity card/passport at the entry.
PROPOSED NEXT STEPS ON RISK ASSESSMENT WORK

1. Consideration of further work on risk assessment should take into account the discussion that the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organisation (ICPHSO) will have during the International Product Safety Week, on 15-19 October 2012. As shown in Box 1, this discussion will consider pre- and post-market risk assessment, in the context of increasingly complex supply chains.

Box 1. ICPHSO agenda item on product risk assessment

Day 1 (Tuesday, 16 October) - Risk Assessment

With increasing globalization and complexity of supply chain, there is a pressing need to further explore the holistic integration of risk assessment into every facet of supply chain management. The session will include three topics:

- **Supply chain overview**: to present an overview of supply chain from product ideation, development and production, to market distribution. Identify the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders as well as primary considerations at each phase for risk assessment.

- **Pre-market risk assessment**: the objective is to achieve essential safety through product design and development. A framework will be presented to introduce risk assessment at product design stage. Methodologies will be introduced to illustrate assessment from both physical/mechanical and chemical aspects.

- **Post-market risk assessment**: the objective is to accurately evaluate the risk in order to determine whether and what corrective actions need to be taken. Practical considerations will be given particularly towards risk tolerance for consumers and society.

**Moderator**: John Keogh, GS1

**Speakers**: Dr. Elizabeth Nielsen, Chair of ISO PC243; Gene Rider, President, Intertek Consumer Goods North America; Juergen Vogelgesang, European Commission

Day 2 (Wednesday, 17 October) Risk Assessment Panel

The panel will focus on case studies featuring post-market risk assessment. Examples of risk assessments conducted by regulators, industry, and consumer advocates on a variety of product categories will be presented. The focus of the presentations will be on risk assessment methodology, results, and the decisions or action proposed based on the findings. Time will be allowed for discussion to explore the divergence or convergence of the results of the case studies.

**Moderator**: Carol Pollack-Nelson, ICPHSO President-elect

**Speakers**: Dirk van Aken, Dutch Governmental Expert; Helen Ryan, Health Canada; Ruth Mackay OECD Consumer Safety Working Party Chair; Simon Long, Dyson

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Possible next steps

2. The working party will be invited to discuss the following eight initiatives, in light of the ICPHSO discussion. Delegates will also be invited to propose other initiatives, as appropriate.

1. Develop guidelines or a set of principles on risk assessment

   The working party could form a group which could take the commonly-agreed points of the workshop and develop these further into guidelines or a set of principles. Such a document may be of benefit to the many jurisdictions that are yet to formalise a risk assessment methodology. Table 1 of the workshop summary, which presents a summary of the group’s discussion, might form a useful basis for such a guide.

2. Develop a template for sharing risk assessment outcomes

   Although countries may have different risk assessment methodologies or indeed may not have yet formalised a methodology, it seems apparent that there is a substantial amount of agreement about the attributes that are considered relevant. If these relevant attributes were turned into a template which provided guidance about the nature of information that would be useful, these could then be used to share information about new hazards (or hazards where regulation is being contemplated). This may, for instance, be appropriate information to go into the “Regulator-only” section of the Inventory on product safety initiatives. Alternatively, the template might be used as a tool to enhance transparency internationally. A template might include, for example:

   - **Product description.** Please describe the product that is the subject of the risk assessment. If possible include a picture and any useful identifying features, such as UPC, HTC or customs codes.

   - **Product user group.** Please describe which product user group is associated with this product, e.g. ‘children under 3’ or ‘toddlers’. If there are multiple users or important sub groups please provide assessments for each sub group.

   - **Hazard scenario.** Please outline the hazard scenario envisaged by this assessment.

   - **Probability of hazard occurring.** Please outline your assessment of the likelihood that the hazard scenario will occur. If there is any documentation supporting this assessment, such as expert analysis, chemical migration data or scientific study please attach or reference it.

   - **Injury severity.** Please outline the nature of injury that might result from the hazard scenario. If there is a table or reference used to support the severity conclusion it would be helpful if it, or a link to it, were attached. If any existing injury data is available please provide it.

3. Develop common tools

   It might be possible to develop a methodology that is consistent amongst working party members. This may be ambitious initially; however, it may be possible to agree on certain common reference tables. For example, Australia now references the RAPEX severity table. If various risk assessment elements were to be agreed on, it might be possible to minimise differences of view in terms of overall assessments. One of the workshop working groups suggested that it would be useful to explore options for mutual acceptance of assessments.
4. **Organisation of a further workshop**

A further workshop could be organised, for instance on hazard probability, as this variable seems to be most susceptible to varying judgements. The workshop could focus on developing supporting materials such as the introduction of probability ranges and rules of logic. It might be possible to ask a consultant expert (such as Prof. Mark Burgman, who presented at the last workshop) to focus on this area and then facilitate an intensive workshop. Work of some sort in the area of probability was a theme across the three workgroups during the previous workshop.

5. **Collect reference cases**

An area of the inventory portal could centralise a collection of injury assessments provided by member jurisdictions. This historical collection might be a useful reference for jurisdictions examining a similar hazard or their risk assessment methodology. Availability of such information might promote consistency.

6. **Conduct training or education**

The possibility of conducting training or education was raised by one of the workshop working groups. This might be an option that should be considered if there is agreement to develop some common tools for education and training.

7. **Share tools on how to authenticate non-genuine products**

This option was also raised by one of the workshop working groups. Recently ISO announced the development of a new standard in this area. The working party’s working group may like to consider whether it sees a role for itself in this area. Perhaps this could be an area where the working party could develop training (e.g. on-line training available from the inventory portal).

8. **Make use of scientific committees**

There was a strong view at the workshop that risk assessment should be supported by science. One group has suggested that a scientific committee might be useful to discuss principles and best practices. Codex Alimentarius in the food area might be a useful example of how such a committee might work.
ANNEX I
MAP TO GET TO THE BUILDING